

Here are four widely held expectations from Foundations, all from the subdomain Motor Skills:

- Children begin to develop body strength, balance, flexibility, and stamina.
- Children begin to develop large muscle control and coordinate movements in their upper and/or lower body.
- Children begin to explore a variety of equipment and activities that enhance gross motor development (e.g., balls, slides, locomotive toys, and assistive technology).
- Children begin to increase the ability to move their bodies in space (running, jumping, skipping).

Consider this scenario:

A principal returns from a playground safety training and tells the pre-kindergarten teachers, “All these regulations are too difficult. We’re going to remove all of the playground equipment and just have a big, empty fenced-in area where the children can run around as much as they want.”

**That is, to say the least, a radical approach that does not take into consideration the needs of children and their development.**

Children’s physical development involves all large muscles and small muscles, and cannot be addressed adequately by allowing them to run without alternative movement possibilities. The outdoor learning environment tends to address large motor development, although it certainly includes many opportunities for small motor development as well.

Exercise:

1. Refer to *Foundations* for the Strategies for Early Educators AND Families for the subdomain Motor Skills.
2. Choose at least three of these strategies that this teacher could use to help children develop the three widely held expectations bulleted above.

NOTE: “Making the Connection – Health and Physical Development” in the box above lists specific guidelines, standards, objectives, etc., all of which support better practice.